

September 18: “Biblical Visions of Life after Death - What the Old Testament Says”

Professor Emeritus Dan Simundson, Luther Seminary

There is very little hope for an individual life after death in the Old Testament. Later generations understood some passages as promises for life after death.

September 25: “Biblical Visions of Life after Death - What the New Testament Says”

Professor Emeritus Dan Simundson, Luther Seminary

The New Testament deals with the need for a life beyond this one to make justice possible (a heaven and a hell). More specific hopes are described in John than in other gospels, as well as in the epistles and Revelation.

October 2, 9: “Unbelief in America”

Professor Sarah Ruble, Gustavus Adolphus College

While the vast majority of Americans claim that they pray, believe in the afterlife, and experience miracles, not all Americans fit this description. We will explore the “religious” roots of skepticism as well as some of the intellectual developments that made religious skepticism compelling to some Americans. We will also explore the so-called “new atheists” and their current critiques of religious faith.

October 16: “The Power of Words”

Rochester Diversity Council

Language is filled with subtle nuances - words can pack hurtful power even when the intent is neutral or positive. Participants will learn about making informed choices in their use of language.

October 23: “Luther and the Religions”

Professor Winston Persaud, Wartburg Theological Seminary

In the face of contemporary global realities, it is important to think about a Christian response to religious pluralism. In this session, we will do so by looking at some of the major theological themes in Luther’s writings, particularly regarding his attitude to Papal Christianity, Judaism, and Islam in the 16th century.

October 30: “God and Massive Human Suffering: A Look at the Holocaust” (Session will be held in the chapel.)

Professor Darrell Jodock, Gustavus Adolphus College

Between 1941 and 1945, the Nazis deliberately and systematically killed about 11 million non-combatants. Roughly half were Jews. The suffering of the victims and their loved ones is incalculable. How can we understand God’s relationship to massive human suffering? What ideas have emerged as Jewish and Christian thinkers have pondered this question?

November 6: “Our Calling as Christians Living after the Holocaust” (Session will be held in the chapel.)

Professor Darrell Jodock, Gustavus Adolphus College

During the Holocaust, not everyone supported the Nazis. Some were resisters, who tried to overthrow the regime. Others were rescuers, who saved the lives of people targeted to be killed. How did the Holocaust intensify our responsibilities? What can we learn about discipleship today from those who went along and from the rescuers and resisters?

November 13: “Early Christianities”

Professor Chad Israelson, Rochester Community and Technical College

The history of Christianity is filled with a variety of controversies and diversity of belief. This session will focus on some of the early groups, writings, and theologies that did not become part of orthodox Christian belief. In combating what would eventually be described as heresy, the church was able to refine its own core theology and become the dominant religion of Western Civilization.

November 20: “Predestination”

Retired Pastor Robert Onkka

Pastor Onkka will lead us in a look at Paul’s understanding of the word “chosen” in Ephesians 1:3-14 and the comfort, peace, and power for daily living we find in that word.

December 4: “Tests of Faith: How to Handle Adversity in Our Lives”

Dr. Thomas Bower, Mayo Clinic Vascular Surgery

All of us face adversity in our lives, either in our jobs, at home with our spouse or children, or with our health. This session will use a ‘faith story’ to lay the foundation for the discussion of faith and adversity, supplemented with scripture and information from two popular religious books.

December 11: “Examining the Story of Jesus’ Birth”

Bill Bakken, Retired RCTC Professor



The Bible stories of Jesus' birth and the events related to it present a familiar and exciting tale to Christians everywhere. In this session, we will compare the Biblical stories in Matthew and Luke looking for similarities and differences. We will also look at Jewish and Roman history and the astronomical record to try to place this important event within an historical content.

January 8: **“Humor in the Bible; Let’s Look at Jonah”** *Pastor Norman Wahl*

Bible readers often skip over the subtle humor of the Scriptures. Jonah is full of mirth, sometimes decipherable only in the Hebrew or Greek (as is true in translating from any language into another). Find out how God used the lousiest sermon ever to turn peoples' hearts!

January 15: **“The Power of Forgiveness”**

Pastor Anjanette Rist

God desires for us to be in life-giving relationships with one another. Often our human frailty and failings cause relationships to fracture, creating wounds of the heart that are difficult to heal. This session will explore Biblical examples of forgiveness and how we might live out the petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us”.

January 22: **“Preparing the Mind for Forgiveness”**

Dr. Amit Sood, Mayo Clinic General Internal Medicine

In this session, we will seek to understand the workings of the human mind and brain. We will learn about setting our minds to forgive.



January 29: **“Christ’s Message of Nonviolence”**

Matthew Webster, J.D., Student of the The Metta Center for Nonviolence

This week’s session will analyze Jesus’ message of nonviolence. We will examine how this message has and has not been incorporated throughout the church’s history, and it’s challenge for us today as people of faith.



February 5: **“Faith Like a Child: What is Children’s Faith Like?”**

Instructor Jessica Pleuss, University of Minnesota and Pastor Andrew Nelson

Jessica and Pastor Andy will discuss faith development in children. We will explore the characteristics of faith in childhood and their implications for nurturing faith in children.

February 12: **”The Book of Revelation: Final Tribulation or Testament to Hope?”**

Professor Karoline Lewis, Luther Seminary

The book of Revelation is the most misunderstood book in the Bible yet for it’s first readers, it was a book of profound faith. This session will dispel the myths and misinterpretations that surround the last book of the Bible and help us to hear Revelation as a message of hope even today.

February 19: **FAITH MATTERS!**

Reverend Tim Coltvet, Coordinator of Contextual Learning and Coaching Children, Youth and Family, Luther Seminary

Discover more about Exemplary Family Involvement assets! Seeing the "big picture" of faith formation and family involvement in today's culture is key to the future of the church. If faith matters to family life beyond the four walls of the church, there's a good chance that faith will matter in the long haul for a young person of faith! Come learn more about the importance of investing in your family and it's future!

February 26:**Snakes in the Grass: Hidden Risks of Herbal Therapy You Need to Know About”**

Dr. Brent Bauer, Mayo Clinic General Internal Medicine

Can heart transplant rejection be brought on by a common herb? Absolutely! There are many snakes in the grass’ (i.e. hidden dangers). When it comes to using herbs and dietary supplements, some of the most dangerous interactions are with common drugs. Dr. Bauer will discuss some of the common risks associated with common herbs and how to avoid them.

March 4: **Topic to be announced.**

Professor Guy Nave, Luther College_____

March 11: “The Authority of the Bible”

Professor Darrell Jodock, Gustavus Adolphus College

If something has authority, it has a claim on a person’s thinking and decision-making. This session will explore what kind of authority the Bible has for persons in the community of faith. In what ways is the Bible useful, and what does this say about its authority? Some attention will also be given to what claim the Bible may have for those outside of the community of faith.

March 18: ”Adoption in the Christian Family”

Rachel Faust, Pregnancy and Adoption Counselor for Lutheran Social Service.

Learn more about how adoption has changed over the years and how as a congregation, we can support expectant parents considering placing their child for adoption and how to support adoptive parents hoping to grow their family.

March 25: “Why Do Lutherans Baptize Infants?”

Professor Mark Tranvik, Augsburg College

In our time together, we will take a look at some of the arguments that erupted in the Reformation about the issue of baptism. We will also connect to living out our faith today.

Weekly Worship Scriptures is an informal study that helps participants gain deeper appreciation of Lectionary Bible scriptures. No preparation or special knowledge is needed. Come as you are and learn more about the Bible! We meet in Room 115 and are led by Pastor Onkka on Mondays at 6:30pm and Pastor Andy on Wednesdays at 10:00am.

Early Morning Read Through the Bible is an informal and lively study that guides us through all the books of the Bible led by Pastor Wahl in Room 115 on Wednesdays, 6:30am.

Moms & Kids meets on Thursdays at 9:15 am in Room 115 (September-May). Childcare is provided in the Nursery. Several topics are discussed through the school year as well as sharing great fellowship and led by Pastor Anjanette.

WELCA Studies meets on the first Thursday of the month at 10:45am in Room 115. The *Gather for Faith and Action* (formerly *Lutheran Woman Today*) magazine studies are used and sessions are led by Pastor Andy.

Men's Ministry meets the third Sunday of the month at 6:30 pm with Pastor Wahl. Service projects are also planned.

B.R.I.D.G.E. Building Relationships In a Dynamic Group Experience! Sermon based groups meet weekly to study, share, and support one another in their Christian lives. The studies are based on the previous Sunday’s sermon. Best of all there is no preparation! Each group is led by a facilitator. There are three eight-week sessions during the year. Contact Doug or Cindy Boese:boesemom@yahoo.com, 285-1866 or Avis Hagen: hagen@bethellutheran.com, 288-6430.

Bethel Lutheran Church
Rochester, Minnesota

Sunday Morning Education Forum



September 18, 2011 - March 25, 2012

**Forums are held on Sundays
at 10:30 a.m. in Room 115**

(unless otherwise noted)

Everyone is invited to participate in some way in the upcoming Education Forums. Also noted are Bible Studies that we hope you will attend.